Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISTANB 00610 080850Z

12
ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /007 W
---------- 032775
R 080810Z MAR 74
FM AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4965
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISTANBUL 0610

LIMDIS

DEPT. FOR DILLON NEA/TUR EYES ONLY

ANKARA FOR DRAPER

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TU, PINR, PINT
SUBJ: ARMENIAN PATRIARCH RESPONDS TO ALLEGATIONS
ON THY'S DC-10 CRASH

1. BASED ON PRESS REPORTS FROM TEHRAN THAT AN ARMENIAN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION THERE HAD CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR RECENT CRASH OF TURKISH AIRLINES DC-10 NEAR PARIS, ASSOCIATED PRESS REPORT HERE ON MARCH 5 QUOTED ARMENIAN PATRIARCH KALUSTYAN AS SAYING IT WAS "VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE THAT ANY ARMENIAN LIBERATION ORGANIZATION HAD PLAYED PART" IN CRASH. FURTHER QUOTES KALUSTYAN AS SAYING "HORROR AND SEVERE CONDEMNATION" WOULD BE HIS REACTION IF REPORT PROVED TRUE AND THAT "SUCH (ARMENIAN) ORGANIZATIONS HAVE NEITHER THE MEANS NOR THE AUDACITY FOR SUCH AN ACT". AP REPORT ADDS THAT ARMENIAN ORGANIZATIONS IN LEBANON AND ELSWHERE PERIODICALLY STAGE ANTI-TURKISH DEMONSTRATIONS, SAYS ARMENIANS WERE DRIVEN FROM HOME-LAND IN 1915, AND REFERS TO LAST YEAR'S MURDER OF TWO TURKISH DIPLOMATS IN SANTA BARBARA AS FIRST ANTI-TERRORIST ACT ATTRIBUTED TO AN ARMENIAN SINCE THE 1920S.

2. TURKISH DAILY GUN AYDIN OF MARCH 6 CARRIED STORY BASED ON AP REPORT UNDER FRONT-PAGE HEADLINE READING "AFTER ARAB AND JAPANESE
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PAGE 02 ISTANB 00610 080850Z

TERRORISTS, SABATOGE ALLEGEDLY ARRANGED BY AN ARMENIAN

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

ORGANIZATION". WHILE BASICALLY A TRANSLATION OF THE AP REPORT, GUN AYDIN STORY GOES ON TO SAY THAT DESPITE CLAIMS BY OVERSEAS ARMENIANS THAT MURDER OF TWO DIPLOMATS WAS NOT AN ARMENIAN PROTEST, SUSPICION HAS BEEN GROWING IN "SOME CIRCLES" THAT ARMENIANS MIGHT BE ABLE TO SABOTAGE A TURKISH AIRCRAFT. STORY CONCLUDES THAT RECENT CLAIMS BY OTHER TERRORIST GROUPS HOWEVER HAS CAST DOUBT ON POSSIBILITY THAT IT DONE BY ARMENIANS.

COMMENT: CONGENOFF TOLD BY RELIABLE SOURCE THAT AP REPORT OF PATRIARCH'S REMARKS WAS OBTAINED IN TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BY AP CORRESPONDENT HERE, WHO IRONICALLY, IS SAID TO BE VERY PRO-ARMENIAN. SAME SOURCE SAID HE PLANNED SUGGEST TO PATRIARCH THAT IN FUTURE HE AVOID DIRECT, SPUR OF THE MOMENT REPLIES TO JOURNALISTS' INQUIRIES. SOURCE SAID PROBLEM IS THAT KALUSTYAN IS ONLY ONE IN PATRIARCHATE WHO SPEAKS ENGLISH AND AS RESULT SUCH INQUIRIES GET PASSED ON TO HIM DIRECTLY.
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